

over 100 helicopters since 9/11. Many of those lost helicopters have not been replaced. It took 4 years to replace the first helicopter that was lost in 2001. The Army has lost over 100 tanks and armored vehicles and over 1,000 vehicles since the start of the war.

Readiness trends for active units are falling, and nondeployed units are severely degraded.

□ 2210

Nearly all of the nondeployed Army units are suffering degraded readiness, with unprecedented numbers of units reporting at the lowest levels of mission capability. Units preparing to deploy for Iraq are being issued equipment. In many cases this equipment arrives right before deployment. This limits the training opportunities for units returning to combat.

Regarding their pre-positioned equipment, let us speak about that. Much of it is no longer pre-positioned. Pre-positioned equipment stocks have been seriously depleted to support the war in Iraq.

Nearly 40 percent of the Marine Corps positioned to afloat ships have been downloaded. The Army plans to download one of the two afloat brigades to supply more equipment to Iraq. These afloat brigades are used to rapidly provide heavy combat equipment to contingency missions. Afloat brigades reduce deployment time from months to days. This plan is accepting significant strategic risk that will affect force protection capability.

Let us speak about the National Guard equipment. The National Guard only has about 34 percent of its equipment on hand, down from 75 percent of its requirement in 2001. The missing equipment that has been left in Iraq is transferred to units deploying to Iraq. According to the National Guard, reserve equipment for fiscal year 2007, the Army National Guard has been directed to transfer more than 75,000 pieces of equipment valued at \$1.7 billion to the Army to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

There is no plan to replace these items. This lack of equipment at home hinders the Guard's ability to train and adversely affects their ability to be comparable with active component units. Examples of shortages, the North Carolina 30th Brigade Combat Team returned from Iraq in 2005. The unit had left 229 HUMVEES or 73 percent of its predeployment inventory of those vehicles in Iraq.

Regarding repairing all of this damage, it is costly. The Army has at least a \$36 billion bill to repair and replace equipment. In fiscal year 2006, the Army will spend \$13.5 billion this year to repair and replace battle damage and losses from Iraq.

This isn't a full accounting of all losses, because some items such as helicopters, cannot be replaced because they are no longer in production.

The Army estimates that \$17 billion will be required for 2007. If the war in

Iraq ended today, the Army would require 2 years of supplemental appropriations for somewhere between \$24 and \$36 billion. Unfortunately, it will take much more than 2 years to repair or replace that equipment. The Army will not be made whole again for many years.

General Hagee of the Marine Corps reported that it has taken 2 years to produce replacement light armored vehicles from placement of the order until delivery. Army modernization and transformation has slowed due to funding pressures of the war in Iraq. Depots are not operating at full capacity. They are capable of producing 57 million hours of direct labor but are currently estimated at providing about 19 million hours of labor.

According to the Army's Tank and Automotive Command, the Army cannot afford to do full overhauls on its ground equipment and has made a decision to perform reduced scope repairs.

By the way, the Marine Corps has incurred a bill of some \$12 billion to date to reset its equipment.

In 2006, 19 brigade combat teams will return from Iraq. Their equipment is some 600 combat vehicles, 30,000 wheeled vehicles and 615 aircraft, and they will require 24 million hours of direct labor or repair. This will be quite a challenge for the Army, considering that the Army has still not repaired all of the vehicles deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, which returned home in 2004.

By the way, the Marine Corps has determined that equipment deployed to air has suffered such significant damage and wear and tear and that 80 percent of it will need to be replaced.

Regarding the budget pressures affecting everything in the Department of Defense, it goes to make up for budget shortfalls.

The Army reduced its base operation support budget. Some of the cuts, such as cuts to childcare facilities, directly affect military quality of life and make it more difficult for already stressed military families to get by.

The Navy only partially funded its deployed steaming days in the President's budget. The budget included a request for only 36 of the 51 required steaming days for Navy ships, a shortfall of \$120 billion.

The Navy ship program was underfunded. The shipping program was underfunded by the President's budget request by \$119 million this year, bringing the total deferred maintenance bill for Navy ships to \$240 million.

Army modernization is being slowed. The Air Force's fleet of aircraft is aging, and we are not replacing them fast enough. The average age for Air Force aircraft is over 23 years. Some aircraft are over 50 years old. Would one feel safe to be in a 50-year-old commercial airplane? Do we feel we want to have a 50-year-old plane defending our Nation?

Regarding readiness ratings, they continued to fall. Very few non-

deployed units here in the continental United States are rated fully mission capable. Readiness in Iraq remains high, but it is coming on the back of the reset of the Army and Marine Corps. Units in the continental United States are short of equipment having to get additional parts and are sending additional equipment into the fight.

Units are training for Iraq without all of their required equipment. They are getting well only upon arrival in Iraq.

Readiness within the force services is poor across the board, and it continues to trend down. Mostly, this is due to the equipment as well as personnel issues.

When asked if he was comfortable with the readiness of the Army outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, General Schoomaker, the Chief of Staff of the Army, replied no.

Why do I make these comments? Because, under the Constitution of the United States, it is up to us to raise and maintain the military, the wonderful military of the United States. I spoke mostly, of course, this evening about the Army, the United States Army, that magnificent institution whose history is that of protecting freedom; and so much glory is due to those that wore the uniform from the days of our Revolution down to today, and I am so proud of them.

But we in Congress need to take heed of the personnel challenges. We need to take heed of the equipment challenges. We need to do so, and I bring this to the attention of this body, because it is the right thing to do for our country and for the wonderful military and those who wear the uniform of our country.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GERLACH (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of inspecting flood damage in his district.

Mr. MANZULLO (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today until noon on account of family illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HOYER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.